The Search For ABBA®

A Fictional Novella

Your Local ABBA Fan

First published in Great Britain in 2023 by
Century 22 Limited, Pinewood Studios, Iver Heath, Bucks, SLO ONH.
Grateful thanks are extended to PolyGram International and Polar Music for their invaluable help.
ABBA is a registered trademark.
Copyright & 2023 Century 22 Limited. All rights reserved.
Text copyright © 2023 Your Local ABBA Fan.
Published by arrangement with Bengt Nordin Agency, Sweden.
Written by: Your Local ABBA Fan
Edited by: Dick Wallis
Art and design by: Paul Miller
Photo research by: Marianne Wallis Published by: Keith Shackleton
Repro by: Croxsons Printed in Singapore
The publishers and author gratefully acknowledge the help and cooperation of the following, who all contributed in various ways. They are listed alphabetically:
Benny Andersson, Hacan Andersson, Maria Andersson, Steve Ballinger. Mikael Berglund. Asa Bergold, Ingemar Bergman, Orjan Blix. Carole Broughton, Ola Brunkert, Inez Buijtenhek, Caroline Campbell-Marshall, Andrew Casey, Colin Collier. David Collins. Kathryn Courtney. Elizabeth Davies, Robert Day, Philippe Elan, Agnetha Fältskog. Nicholas D. Fältskog, Sheri Fitzsimons, Claes af Geijerstam, Chris Griffin, Rutger Gunnarsson, Corel Hanser, Svenne Hedlund, Jonas Hildeland, Astrid Hoist, Marleen Janssens, Miss T. Jones, Bernhard Keller, Noel King, Florrie Knowles, Angelika Krtiger, Jonas Larsson. Per Lindvall, Anni-Frid Lyngstad. Gunnar Moe, Heike Miiller, Bengt Nordin, Jocke Norling, Anita Notenboom, Micke Olsson, Roger Palm, Roland Palm. Lennart Pettersson, Miss J.E.Phillips, Michael Price, Regina Richter, Krista Ruessink, Janne Schaffer, Henrik Scheutz, Hansi Schwarz. Andre Selbach, Patrick Smith, Rune Soderqvist, John Spalding, Jackie Stansfield, Masaru Suzuki, Marie Svensson, Tommy Tausis, Michael Teske, Gareth Thomas, Michael Tindall, Michael B. Tretow, Manuela Übler, Björn Ulvaeus, Doris Url, Helga van de Kar, Richard van der Keur, Arina van der Velden, Robert Verbeek, Yvonne Voortman, Björn Waldenstrom, Mike Watson, Lasse Wellander, Thomas Winberg and Peter Witt.
For more information on ABBA, write to the following addresses enclosing S.A.E. or two International Reply Coupons: ABBA Information, Century 22 Limited, PO Box 1326, Iver, Bucks, SLO OPP, UK and Agnetha, Benny Björn and Frida Fan Club, PO Box 3079, 4700 AB, Roosendaal, Holland.
British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from th British Library.
ISBN 0-907938-10-8
This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, hired out or, otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any other form of binding or cover other than in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Parts

1. My Love. My Life
2. Arrival
3. Suzy-Hang-Around
4. Move On
5. Hasta Mañana
6. The Visitors
7. Dance (While The Music Still Goes On)
8. When All Is Said And Done
9. Head Over Heels
10. Connect With Your Local ABBA Fan

Dedicated To

ABBA

PART 1
My Love, My Life

"Is it true you're going to Sweden to find ABBA?" That's what my boss asked me before I left for
Sweden in search of ABBA. "No." I said. "I don't think they are lost; but I am going to Sweden in
search of ABBA." The difference: I am not Glenn Close in FATAL ATTRACTION. I didn't have to "find"
ABBA technically. It was enough for me to go to Stockholm and have my picture taken at the very
place in Old Town that ABBA had their picture taken some twenty years ago. All I wanted of this trip
was to have my picture taken in the exact same place so I could hang it next to my poster in San
Francisco and know I had been there. And there is an ironic end to this story.

PART 2
Arrival

I flew into Stockholm on March 29. I took a forty minute bus ride from the airport. Sweden
reminded me of upstate New York except for the fact that all the highway signs seemed to be
written in Pig Latin. (You know, everything seemed to end in an 'a'.) My first order of business, after
visiting the requisite palaces, museums, Skansen and WASA, was to scour the used compact disc
stores for all the rare ABBA music I am not able to find in the United States.

What I learned is: if
you want rare ABBA - don't go to Sweden! I found ABBA-The Tribute, Josefin Nillson's Shapes and
The Ainbusk Singers Från När till fjärran. Not one real ABBA record did I see that I did not already
have. The treasured haul I had hoped for never materialised; but unbeknownst to me, it was right
around the corner.

PART 3
Suzy-Hang Around

Right around the corner from the last music store I went to was Polar Studios. I was going there to
take the picture of the building and the plaque above the doorbell that read POLAR STUDIOS. I
couldn't wait.
I turned the corner, saw the building and took a few pictures. When I walked up to the door to take
a picture of the plaque, I realized that the front of the studio was actually mirrored glass. Those on
the outside could not see in...BUT I SAW SHAPES MOVING INSIDE. You see, if you push your nose
into mirrored glass you can actually see through it. Well...after wiping the drool off my lower lip, I
put my nose to the glass and watched these people. At this point, a woman came to the front door,
opened it and asked me a question in Swedish. "I'm sorry," I said. "I don't speak Swedish."
"Can I help you?" she asked.
"Oh, not really." I stammered. "I'm an ABBA fan from the United States. I have a web page on the Internet devoted to them. I just wanted to stop by, take a picture of your door jamb and walk where I know they have walked. But thanks for asking." I turned to walk away when she said,

"Would you like to come in and have a look around?" Let me see if Agnetha is around."
She closed the door and left me, once again, with spittle pouring out of my mouth.
"Did she say Agnetha?" I thought.
"Oh dear, I am getting a tour of Polar Studios from Agnetha. I am going to die, right here. Right now."
She came back to the door and said,
"Please come in. Annika has a few moments."
OK, so I had
misunderstood her accent. But Annika was good. I could deal with a tour of Polar Studios by
Annika. So I learned to use my legs again and followed her to the reception desk and was
introduced to Annika.
The first thing Annika showed me was a big wooden piano-looking, glockenspheel kind of thing She
said this was an instrument that Benny and Bjorn had invented that they had used on some of their
records. That's when I asked the inevitable question, "Are they here today?"
"No," she said, "they aren't recording today. But we can look in the studio. Thomas Ledin is in
there." Annika knew she didn't have to explain that Ledin had recorded some duets with Agnetha in
the eighties. Today he was solo. Darn it.

After leaving the studio, someone walked by us and they were wearing a Polar Studios t-shirt. I said
to Annika, who at this point had become my best friend in the world, "I must have one of those
shirts. I have 1000 kroner on me right now. It's yours."
"Oh, Michael. Don't be absurd. What size are you?"
"As big as they come."

She walked around her desk, handed me a t-shirt and said, "Think of it as a gift from Benny and
Bjorn." So I flew out of Polar Studios on gossamer wings and decided, even though it was 4:30 pm
on the Friday before Easter, to take a bus to Mono Music. Who knows, maybe I would meet Gorel
Hanser?
The bus trip took about an hour, from one end of Stockholm to the other. I got to the Mono Music
building (picture below) at about 4:55 pm and saw this woman walking from a car back to the front
door of the building. I followed her inside the building and introduced myself.
She said, "Well, it's nice to meet you Michael. I am Gorel but I am running to get to the airport so I
have no time to speak to you now."
"I didn't even expect to meet you," I said. "But here is my card. It has my web page address. Check
it out if you have the time. And tell Benny and Bjorn about it too. Thank you so much."
She left. I left. But to this day I never got an email from Gorel. Gorel, are you out there?

PART 4
Move On

I spent my last day in Stockholm in Old Town looking for the infamous place where ABBA had
taken that fateful picture. I spent hours walking around asking people to take my picture in front of
fountains, buildings and squares, knowing in my heart that none of these was the square that I
wanted. I had one hour and one picture left and started to walk to the train station. As I was leaving the Old Town I passed this woman with

two children. As I had the one picture left I asked her if she could take it. She said, "Absolutely" and retraced her steps to get a bigger background. I smiled and left for the train station, disappointed but realizing that Old Town would always be in my heart, if not on my film.

I rode to Malmo to wait for the ferry to Copenhagen. One of the ABBAnatic places I saw was the State Theater which, at the time, was in between its engagements of Kristina Från Duvemala.

I took some pictures of the theater anyway so I could live vicariously through at least one Kodak moment.

PART 5
Hasta Mañana

I arrived in Scheidam the evening before the Day, the 12th of April, 1996. I wanted to get myself settled and get a good night's sleep before the pomp and circumstance. Now Scheidam has some lovely parts, ie: canals, windmills, architecture; but on a Friday night there's "bupkus" in terms of evening entertainment. I spent the night sitting in front of a statue in a lovely little park and going back to the hotel to watch Streets Of Gold starring Klaus Maria Brandeaur. Thankfully, it was not dubbed from its original English. As the sound of bones breaking and blood gushing lulled me to sleep, I thought, "It's okay. Tomorrow is the real reason I came to Scheidam."

PART 6
The Visitors

I awoke bright and early and had myself a hearty, hotel breakfast. Thankfully this was, as it turned
out to be the only food I had until dinner. With camera in hand, I left the hotel. I turned the corner at 10:30 am and saw about 100 ABBAnatics. Muriel was even there. (Actually it was a four foot cardboard cut-out promotional piece from the movie but I can dream, can't I.)
We congregated around the entrance, chatting among ourselves until 11:00 am, when the doors finally opened. As a non-member of the ABBF fan club I paid 7.50 guilders and, as everyone did,
received an ABBF fan club 10th anniversary cloth bag in which I was able to drop all my ABBAgoodies.
There was an immediate scramble to get to the sale tables first. I was specifically looking for bootleg cds so I made my first round just looking for the treasures. I found exactly what I had hoped to find: ABBA 1970-1982 and Dancing Queens, both 50 guilders (about $33 dollars US). Not a bad price since later in the day I saw both cds for 70 guilders and upwards.
Much of the merchandise, not including the ABBF fan club and the couple selling Made In Sweden for 25 guilders, was very over-priced. I guess those of us who made it there are what one would call a captive audience. After my purchases I was able to relax and take a stroll around. I first visited the ABBA Museum, in which I was NOT allowed to take pictures. It was quite entertaining. I saw the four ABBA dolls, gold records presented to Gorel Hanser for sales of ABBA Gold, rare LPs, newspaper clippings, an ABBA belt and the infamous ABBA soap and perfume. In addition, they had Agnetha's, Benny's and Bjorn's blue satin tuxedo jackets on display. I could not believe it when I saw Benny's tails. I had coveted them from afar for many years and now, to see them in person, and to see for myself that, in fact, they would never fit me. He seems so much bigger on cd.

After the museum I did some more shopping. I picked up a t-shirt and some pictures. I also saw a multitude of t-shirts that fellow ABBAnatics had made themselves, from silk-screened pictures of Frida and Agnetha to a hand-painted shirt that said "Take A Chance On ABBA". There is so little out there for the average ABBAnatic, it is nice to see how resourceful we have become.
Throughout this time I also managed to meet and talk with many people, some of which I have met through the internet. Anita and Helga, the women who run the fan club and organized this day; Jeffrey de Hart, American correspondent of the ABBF fan club; Tamara Bakker, who bought and sent me my first bootleg; Bart from Amsterdam whom I never got to tell about Egbert and Egberta; Richard and Lester who came in from England and stayed at The Windmill Hotel also; Kevin Fletcher and his lovely wife, a guy from North Carolina, a girl from Holland, a guyfrom Belgium, a singer from France. It was an endless parade.
After my second shopping spree I went to check out the video room. Playing in the room was A Is For Agnetha, the special made for the release of Eyes Of A Woman and A Is For ABBA, the 1993 John Peel special. Both were quite entertaining, especially the video Agnetha made for I Won't Let You Go, one of my favorite solo numbers. I also saw Frida and The Real Group, Frida and Marie Fredricksson and Frida alone singing Saltwater. In addition, there were numerous ABBA live performances and the quartet of corny commercials the group made for the Australian electronics company, National.

Following the videos I took one more shopping stroll and bought something, which will most probably be one of my most useful pieces of ABBA memoribilia: an ABBA umbrella.
Now I have one more reason to be happy when it rains. I then went back to the hotel to drop off my spoils and ready myself for the dinner and ABBA disco.

PART 7
Dance (While The Music Still Goes On)

The dinner was for members of the club only but, as I had travelled so far and Jeffrey is so persuasive, I was able to attend. As there were no open restaurants in the area I considered myself very lucky; although I had to throw away my vegetarian beliefs for the evening and eat the pork chops. The desert was an incredible simulation of chocolate pudding. Around 7:00 pm, they started what I had been waiting for the most: the ABBA disco, one long night of dancing to just ABBA-related music. Until 11:00 pm, it was non-stop. I was a ball of sweat by the time everyone joined hands for the last song, **The Way Old Friends Do**.
The one problem though was the song choices. In four hours I heard **Gimme Gimme Gimme (A Man After Midnight)** three times but never heard **Does Your Mother Know**. The dj played **If It Wasn't For The Nights** only after I requested it three times; and when the first strains wafted through the speakers, the floor became wall-to-wall people.

I heard **Voulez-Vous** four times but never heard
Fernando or I've Been Waiting For You. Granted these songs are slow numbers but I did hear
Chiquitita. And there were couples who would've danced to these ballads anyway. Hell, I would've
danced to these alone. I believe that the crowd there would have danced to anything by ABBA.

So why play some (ie: disco ABBA such as **The Visitors** or **Lay All Your Love On Me**) songs ad infinitum.
I was a disc jockey in a nightclub for over three years and annually held an ABBA night called ABBArama. As part of the evening I played ABBA: The Movie, ABBA videos and a night of ABBA-related music. As this was prior to the resurgence of ABBA in the public eye not more than twenty

people ever showed up but, I never repeated a song. **Hey, Hey Helen** was right beside **Super Trouper**; **Bang-A-Boomerang** backed with **The Name Of The Game**. There is too much ABBA music to enjoy on a dance floor! So I say to Anita, "Next year, I'll be the dj." Although now I don't know: would I rather dj or dance?
AAhhh, I can do both. Just give me a call, Anita

PART 8
When All Is Said And Done

All in all, I did get my four hours of dancing in and ABBA Day was a resounding success. I met a lot of great people and had a lot of fun. And, if I might toot my own horn, my Polar Studios t-shirt made me the envy of everyone who saw it So who's up for November 23 in Bristol? I'm checking airfares.

So what is left? Oh, the irony of it all...

PART 9
Head Over Heels

...After all this you might say, "Wait a minute. In Part 4, the funny guy said he never got the picture. So where did the one you have come from?"
Well, when I wrote Part 4 on the train to Malmo as far as I knew I never got to the same place. When I arrived back in the United States I developed my four rolls of film and upon looking at the pictures I was flabbergasted to see that the last picture of me in Old Town taken by the wonderful woman with the two children was actually taken in the very spot that ABBA had stood almost twenty years earlier. And I never knew it! (FYI, I was standing in Björn's spot.)
So remember be careful what you wish for, you just might get it. Wait...that isn't the right moral for this allegorical story. I'll go think of another one and tell you later.
as you read.

Thank You For The Music

Connect With Your Local ABBA Fan

Discord: yourlocalabbafan
Website: archiveabba.wixsite.com/abbathe-fansite
Main YouTube: @yourlocalabbafan
Secondary YouTube: @ABBAArchive
Internet Archive: archive.org/details/@stuffie_records
Main Email: yourlocalabbafan@gmail.com
Secondary Email: archiveabba@gmail.com

"Like the sunrise in the morning
Life is dawning, move on
How I treasure every minute
Being part of, being in it"
-ABBA In "Move On" (1977)

The Search For ABBA®

A Fictional Novella

Right around the corner from the last music store I went to was Polar Studios. I was going there to take the picture of the building and the plaque above the doorbell that read POLAR STUDIOS. I couldn't wait.

I turned the corner, saw the building and took a few pictures. When I walked up to the door to take a picture of the plaque, I realized that the front of the studio was actually mirrored glass. Those on the outside could not see in...BUT I SAW SHAPES MOVING INSIDE. You see, if you push your nose into mirrored glass you can actually see through it. Well...after wiping the drool off my lower lip, I put my nose to the glass and watched these people. At this point, a woman came to the front door, opened it and asked me a question in Swedish. "I'm sorry," I said. "I don't speak Swedish."

"Can I help you?" she asked.

POLAR

US $3.99 - CA $5.28 - SEK $40.50

Copyright © 2023 Polar Music International AB. All Rights Reserved
Used with permission from Polar Music International AB.
"ABBA" And the logo are owned by Polar Music: A Division Of Universal Music Group.
All rights of this E-Novella go to the copyright holders.